

Keeping
Down the Cost
of Your
Woodwork

Belma Gilbert

Keeping Down *the* Cost *of* Your Woodwork



*The woodwork of your home is one of the most important
parts of its very structure*

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Curtis Companies Service Bureau
Clinton, Iowa



*To fireside happiness, to hours of ease
Blest with that charm, the certainty to please.*
—Samuel Rogers

Keeping Down the Cost of Your Woodwork

The common problem, yours, mine, everyone's, is not to fancy what were fair in life provided it could be—but finding first what may be, then find how to make it fair up to our means.—BROWNING

NOT so many years ago, home-builders of good taste who wished to have in their homes a background of beautiful woodwork with architectural value found it almost impossible to obtain such woodwork except by special order, at necessarily great cost. The Curtis Companies have done much to change this—to make this one thing that is “fair in life,” “fair up to our means.” The object of this booklet is to tell you how it is possible for you now to obtain woodwork of excellent design and guaranteed construction at lower cost than you could have done a few years ago.

What is meant by “lower costs?” Curtis Woodwork is not the lowest priced woodwork on the market, but it is the greatest value, dollar for dollar. You may be able to buy, for less money, woodwork that looks something like Curtis material. Cheaper material cannot, of course, have the same quality as Curtis Woodwork all the way through. We do not claim to make the *cheapest* woodwork on the market, but only the *best*. You will find that woodwork bearing the Curtis trademark represents better value, rather than lower first cost.

DESIGN

The first element of its greater value, perhaps, is superior design. Along with a higher standard of living in general, and education in better homes and interior furnishing, there has come an increasing demand for woodwork of better proportions and pattern than are found in ordinary “stock millwork.” The Curtis Companies, led by this demand, re-designed Curtis Woodwork to make it harmonize with the newer furnishings. In this work, the authoritative help of the architectural profession was sought. The present beautiful and authentic designs of Curtis Woodwork are the work of Trowbridge & Ackerman, architects, of New York City, who are acknowledged experts in interior details of homes.

This quality of good design adds nothing to the cost, for it is just as cheap to make a good design as a poor one, and often involves less material rather than more, and simpler forms rather than more ornate ones.

Your architect will not hesitate to recommend Curtis Woodwork for your home, because it is correct in every detail, and will save him and you the labor and expense and delay of specially designed items.

“But how,” you ask, “can Curtis Woodwork be beautiful and be well made without increasing the cost?” Briefly, because it has been standardized and is produced in quantities.

STANDARDIZATION

By standardization, we mean that production has been limited to those designs, sizes and kinds of wood indicated in Curtis literature. These are of sufficient number and variety to cover all needs and all types of houses, but eliminate those sizes and patterns not in demand. Thus waste is eliminated by not producing and keeping in stock material that is little called for.

The woodwork items pictured in most "millwork" catalogs as *stock* are seldom actually on hand; they are a collection of suggested designs which have been detailed and which will be made up upon receipt of your order. The items shown in the Curtis catalog, "Architectural Interior and Exterior Woodwork, Standardized," are made up in quantities, and an effort is made to keep a supply on hand ready for shipment upon receipt of your order.

QUANTITY PRODUCTION

These standardized items of Curtis Woodwork are produced in large quantities. It is easily understood that a hundred sideboards, for instance, can be produced at a much lower proportionate cost than a single one. Accurate "details" must be prepared and if these can be used again and again, a large factor in the cost of production is eliminated. In making a sideboard, no less than 19 operations are necessary. For these, intricate machines must be set and adjusted, and material prepared. This can be done in practically the same time for 100 to be run through as for 1, thus distributing the cost.

CONSTRUCTION

Wood is the only building material that grows. For that reason it is seldom perfect and is more subject to the action of heat or moisture than any other building material. It must be protected against damage from these elements from the time the tree is felled—during the time it is being made into woodwork in the factory, while in storage, in transit, in the hands of your painter and finisher, and even during the years that it is in your home. The construction of Curtis Woodwork takes account of these factors and minimizes the chances of your woodwork "going wrong" after it leaves our hands.

There is not space here to tell about the special construction features which distinguish Curtis Woodwork from ordinary "millwork." Some of them are shown, however, on the following pages, in diagrams showing details of Curtis stairs, cabinet work and doors.

Workmen making more than one piece of a kind at a time soon find better ways of doing the work, and therefore make a product of better quality. Many of the special Curtis construction features have been worked out by the men in the Curtis factories because they were interested in making Curtis Woodwork the best you can buy. If they made each piece but once, the purchaser could not profit from their experience.

DELIVERIES

Curtis Woodwork is made in quantities and kept in stock, not only by the various Curtis factories, but by Curtis dealers throughout the East and Middle West. With this wide distribution, your order can be delivered promptly, so that your workmen need not be held up waiting for your woodwork to be made at the mill.

GUARANTEE

Every piece of Curtis Woodwork that you buy carries, as a final pledge of its better value, the guarantee: "The makers of Curtis Woodwork guarantee complete satisfaction to its users. 'We're not satisfied unless you are.'" If you believe with us that economy does not refer to money hoarded, but to money *wisely* spent, ask your lumber dealer to furnish Curtis Woodwork for your house, and look for the Curtis trademark upon it.

Restful Rooms

HOME is a place of rest. We seek for comfort in our homes. We mean something more than bodily ease when we speak of comfort—we must have *mental* rest too. And there can be no mental rest without beauty.

Beauty in the home is of two kinds, architectural and decorative. They are supplementary, and neither can be successful without the other. Rugs, lamps, furniture, pictures—these are decorative elements. Much can be done with them to make a room homelike; but to make a room truly restful it is necessary to have, also, good architectural details to form a background or setting for the decorative features. These architectural details are, in the main, articles of woodwork.

Naturally, the best source of information on the design of interior woodwork is the architectural profession. It was for that reason that the Curtis Companies sought the help of Trowbridge & Ackerman, a firm of architects nationally known for their work in interior details. They re-designed the entire line of Curtis Woodwork, giving it the benefit of their knowledge of design. The Curtis Companies give to it their six decades' experience in the construction of good woodwork. By manufacturing it in quantities, the Curtis Companies are now able to supply the builder with woodwork of architectural character at less cost than made-to-order woodwork of indifferent design and ordinary quality.

The use of standardized forms produced in quantities does not mean in any sense the sacrifice of individuality, because there are many designs from which to choose. Individuality, as one writer puts it, is nothing more than "the best expression of one's sense of beauty and the fitness of things, and when it is guided by the laws of harmony and proportion, the result is usually one of great charm, convenience and comfort."

On the following pages, each of the important rooms in the average house is considered separately. These pages are commended to your careful consideration, for you will find in them many suggestions that will help you to build comfort, convenience and beauty into your home—and this means restful rooms.



Where First Impressions Count

THE exterior of every house, however simple or elaborate, is nothing more than a wall punctured with openings. If it is well proportioned, and if the openings are well spaced and well proportioned, it will create a favorable impression.

Windows having small panes with the division bars between them painted white make interesting openings. Curtis sash are ovolo-molded to match the molding of the doors and woodwork on the interior. Check rails are rabbeted, and so resist seven times as much wind pressure as ordinary check rails.

Blinds contribute color and contrast to the exterior of the house, and they make the rooms within more restful because they enable you to shut out the glaring sun without shutting out the breezes.

The construction of Curtis standard frames for windows and doors reduces coal bills and makes more comfortable rooms.



Entrance C-101

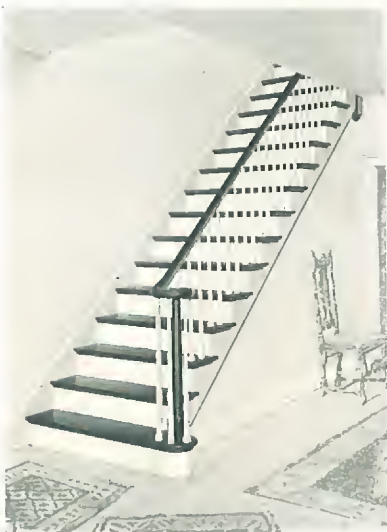


Entrance C-109

Good proportions, dignity, simplicity, are characteristic of all stock Curtis entrances, for large home or small one.



Entrance C-111



Stair C-900



Starting newels and balusters on Curtis stairs like C-900, are dovell-pinned to the solid, built-up starting tread. On stairs like C-913, the newel is tenoned to fit into a mortise in the tread. The result of such forms of construction is balustrades that are strong and stable.

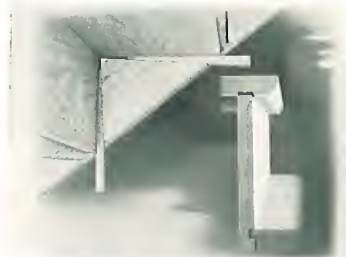


Stair C-913

As the entrance is usually the focal center of the main elevation, it should be selected with care and due regard to the type of home in which it is to be used. There are more than thirty designs in the Curtis catalog.

Strangers judge your home only by those things which are seen from the outside. But you and your family have to live with the things inside. While you are pleased by favorable comment on the beauty of the exterior, you are thrilled with greater pleasure at admiration of the restful rooms within.

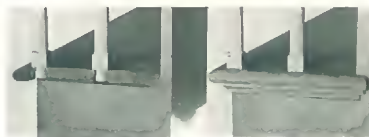
First impressions of the interior are usually made by the hall. In the two-story house the stair may make or mar these first impressions. On account of its size, its utility, its construction as a part of the house, and its possibilities for beauty, the stairway is of both structural and architectural importance. Beauty depends not upon large-sized members, but upon graceful lines, good proportions and finely molded parts. In the entrance hall, French doors also add to the favorable impression which your home makes. They keep out sounds and drafts but do not shut out light between rooms.



A feature of Curtis stair construction which saves time for the carpenter is the "housing" of the wall stringers. The treads and risers, which are tongued-and-grooved together as shown above, on the right, are WEDGED into the housing, not nailed. This is the most satisfactory stair construction that has so far been devised to eliminate creaking and "giving." This picture is taken from the under side of the stair.



Inter-Room Opening C-535



Face stringers (top picture) are tenoned to fit into mortises in corner and angle newels, and are secured on the inside by means of cleats. Balusters (bottom pictures) are dovetailed to the treads, then the nosing and molding are applied.



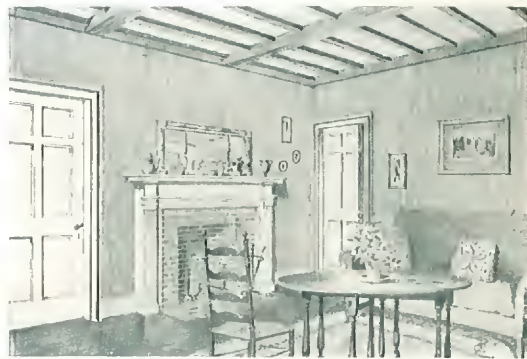
The Living Room That Deserves Its Name

WITH such Curtis Woodwork as mantels, bookcases, inter-room openings, wall paneling and ceiling beams as a background for the living room, its furnishing is greatly simplified and it is easy to make it a room deserving of its name.

Don't consider for a minute doing without a fireplace. The cheer it brings to the family circle, especially at Christmas time, is in itself quite worth its cost. A hearth fire takes the dampness out of the atmosphere in early spring and late fall, when the furnace is not going, and so saves coal bills. The fireplace is valuable as a means of ventilation, too. It is the center of interest in the living room, and should be dignified and beautiful. Many beautiful mantels of architectural merit are shown in the Curtis catalog, for houses of all types.

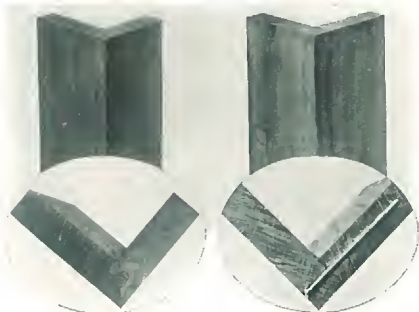
Bookcases in the living room and library combine both architectural and decorative value to a greater degree, perhaps, than does any other one detail. The decorative value of books can hardly be overstated. Curtis bookcases are designed as an integral part of the house. They may be had in various sizes to fit your needs. There are some with beautifully fluted pilasters and others of plainer design but fine proportions. Either type may be had with or without a drawer-pedestal.

Sometimes bookcases are used in combination with a permanent seat, as for example around a window, and the recess thus produced can be made very alluring. Permanent seats also utilize many otherwise unused corners and nooks. They have hinged tops and so can be used for storing miscellaneous household articles.



Paneling is an attractive wall treatment for many homes. The wall may be entirely covered with well-proportioned and carefully molded wood panels, or it may be marked off into rectangles with a simple molding—which is known as “French paneling.” Paneling may be used in other rooms of the house also. Often it is accompanied by beamed ceiling, but ceiling beams can also be used without paneling, if you wish, and give character to a room. They can be used to modify the proportions of the room. They lend an interest to the interior that it might not otherwise have. The Curtis catalog shows wall panelings and ceiling beams of various designs.

In a small house, the rooms can be given the appearance of greater size if inter-room openings are used instead of doors. These wide portals throw the rooms together and permit larger vistas. They may have simple paneled buttresses, or they may contain bookcases, desks, or cabinets that take up very little more floor space than would the partition. In either case the newest and best Curtis designs have columns extending all the way from floor to ceiling.



In permanent furniture the tongue-and-groove mitred joint is used wherever practical. Note the difference between this construction and the common butt joint. With the former, no nails are used that mar the finished surface of the cabinet, and there is no incongruous contrast between edge and flat grain of wood at the corners. Such a joint cannot open up as a result of humidity and temperature changes in the rooms.

All but the smallest drawers in Curtis permanent furniture are made with doweled corners that cannot pull apart. They operate on slides (A), which prevent wobbling and binding. The laminated drawer bottoms are set into grooves in the sides and ends of the drawers. The bottoms cannot shift about.



The mortise-and-tenon joint is used in the face of cabinet work and in the stiles and rails of doors.





Making the Dining Room Inviting

IN no room of the well-planned home is there greater opportunity for good taste in woodwork than in the dining room. The room itself may be attractive before furniture or drapery or carpet has been put in place.

There must be, of course, a sideboard or buffet or perhaps a corner china closet or a pair of them, in which to keep the china and silver and linens. All of these may be had in Curtis built-in furniture of excellent design and proportions, decorative in themselves and as a display of handsome tableware. They may be built into a recess, or set out into the room. They come in different woods, suitable for the finish that will best harmonize with your other woodwork or furniture. There is a wide variety of sizes and types.



Sideboard C-710



"Built-in furniture is very good in a small room, because it takes and keeps its place as a part of the wall and increases the floor space. It is advantageous in a room of great size, because it then becomes of architectural importance, and may be of great decorative value in mass and color."
—The Honest House



China Closet C-703



Buffet C-717



Curtis veneered doors have stiles and rails built-up as shown in the section above. "C" are blocks of California white pine which are tongued-and-grooved and glued together. They will not warp and they are light. "B" are strips of hardwood which form the edges of the stiles and rails and into which the molding is cut on Curtis oculo molded doors. "A" are strips of veneer which are secured to the white pine core by means of waterproof glue. Thus a door is produced with all the beauty of grain of hardwood, combined with the lightness, non-warping, non-checking characteristics of solid softwood doors.



Curtis Standard Trim C-1630

A fireplace here is less essential than in the living room, but if you can include one, it contributes to the spirit of hospitality and cheerfulness which should characterize the room. Choose for it, from among the Curtis standard designs, a simpler mantel than that in the living room.

In a large room, beamed ceiling and wall paneling are impressive. In a dining room of any size, wainscoting is always appropriate and effective, and when you consider how easy it is to clean, and the fact that it never needs renewal, it is an economical wall treatment as well.

One of the important things about the background of the dining room—as of every other room in the house—is the choice of doors, windows and trim. These you must have, and on account of their number, they may do much to improve or to destroy the effect of the whole interior scheme. If you choose Curtis doors—whether they be veneered or solid, whether with raised panels or flat ones, whether with delicate moldings or of Puritanical simplicity—you will have doors of correct proportions and guaranteed construction. The same is true of Curtis windows and casements. The trim around windows and doors offers a splendid opportunity for a choice between molded or plainer Curtis patterns.



Interior Door C-300



Above are shown the two different kinds and patterns of standard moldings on Curtis doors, the "oculo" and the "flush". The former is cut on the stile or rail; the latter is a separate piece that is applied, being nailed to a spline, not to the panel, with the result that when the panel shrinks the molding will not be pulled away from the stile or rail. Note the panel thicknesses, too. Solid raised panels are shown. In doors $1\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick these panels are $1\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thick, while on $1\frac{3}{8}$ -inch thick doors the solid raised panels are $\frac{7}{8}$ -inch thick. The same depth of "recoil" is therefore presented in every door. Solid flat panels in $1\frac{3}{4}$ -inch doors are $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick; in $1\frac{3}{8}$ -inch doors, $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch thick. Laminated or 3-ply panels are always $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch thick.



Interior Door C-305



Combination Kitchen Dresser and Worktable C-760

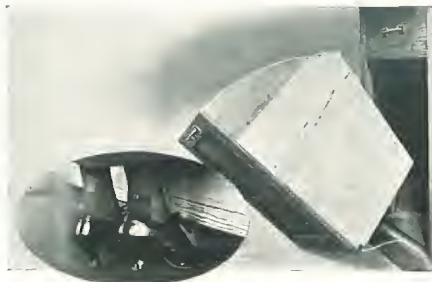
Lightening Kitchen Burdens

MUCH can be done toward lightening kitchen burdens by proper placing of the furniture and equipment. The character and location of dresser, worktable and ironing board must be carefully considered. In the illustration above, one end of the kitchen is so arranged that most of the work can be done there, within a few steps. Regardless of the width of the kitchen, there are units of Curtis permanent furniture for this room that can be employed to form a similar arrangement. Some Curtis dressers are two doors wide,



Kitchen Worktable C-763 (at left)

Hingeless, removable flour bins are used in Curtis kitchen dressers and worktables. They will not fall out. Beneath the front lower edge of worktables space is left for the toes of the person working at the table, enabling one to get up close without discomfort or scuffing the shoes.





Combination Sideboard



Sliding doors separate the countershelves in design C-718. The doors slide on rollers and are guided by a pin which operates in a groove in the bottom edge.

others three; some have a top section extending clear to the ceiling; others do not. Any cabinet can be supplied with either glass or panel doors. In C-718, shown here, the kitchen dresser is combined with the dining room sideboard, with sliding doors between.



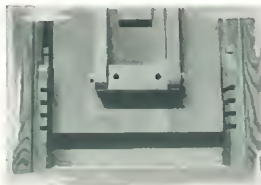
and Kitchen Dresser C-718

There are several different types of worktables in the Curtis catalog. One of them is shown in the large illustration on page 12; another is shown at the bottom of that page. Bins, drawers and cabinets utilize the space beneath the table top. Like Curtis dressers, they are made with "toe-room" for the convenience of the worker. Perhaps a corner of your kitchen can be used for a dining alcove, or a breakfast table that folds into a wall cabinet when not in use, such as are shown on page 15.

There should be a built-in ironing board in every kitchen. It is protected from dust, is completely out of the way and is always ready for use. This board is as easily installed in an old home as it is in a new house.

Any item of Curtis permanent furniture can be installed in a house already built with practically as little trouble as in a new house.

Curtis permanent furniture in the kitchen does much to shorten the working hours of the women of the household. It saves time, steps and a great deal of hard work, leaving the housewife better able to enjoy her family than when she is tired out from heavy kitchen burdens.



Ironing Board C-770. Above you see the construction of the Curtis built-in ironing board, which makes it adjustable in height. At the extreme left is the board in place; at the immediate left, the board in use; at the right the board is shown sustaining a weight of 365 pounds. The sturdy construction of the board and its leg makes a stable ironing board. The above construction is such that the board cannot shift endwise with the motion of the iron.





Where You Spend Over One-third of Your Life

DID you ever stop to realize that you spend more than one-third of your life in your bedroom? This, indeed, should be a restful room! Curtis hanging closets, dressing tables, window seats, tray cases afford compact, accessible places to put away personal belongings, and economize floor space, making even a small bedroom spacious. There are dressing tables of two sizes, both with adjustable side mirrors and a fascinating little bench. The tray cases have sliding, open-end trays of various sizes and are enclosed by one of the regular interior doors, so that the room may always be neat. The hanging closet includes shelf, hanger-rod and shoe rack, and has a raised floor that makes it unusually easy to clean. The dressing table, tray case and hanging closet may be used in any combination, and may be installed in a house already built, if you wish.

Bedroom slat doors are invaluable, especially in warm weather, to increase ventilation while maintaining strict privacy.

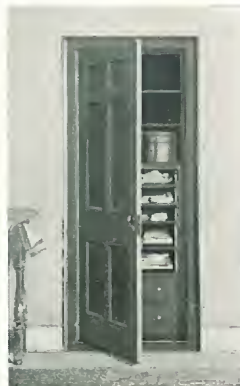
Near the bedrooms and bathroom, a Curtis linen case is indispensable.



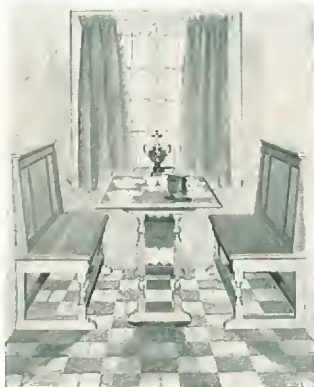
Bedroom Slat Door C-330



Dressing Table C-810, with Hanging Closet and Tray Case



Linen Case C-813



Dining Alcove C-740. If you are planning a small house, a dining alcove will save you the space of a larger dining room; or it can serve as the family dining room in the larger house, when it will save housework and make the serving of simple meals a great deal easier.



Here and There About the House

MANY an old house can be made more livable and many a new one insured greater appreciation by adding one or two features here and there that may perhaps not be necessities, but which will make the home more beautiful, cheerful or convenient—make it more of a home. Such things as a bay window, a dormer, a dining alcove, built-in tables, radiator enclosures, hanging china closets, and medicine cabinets are among these.

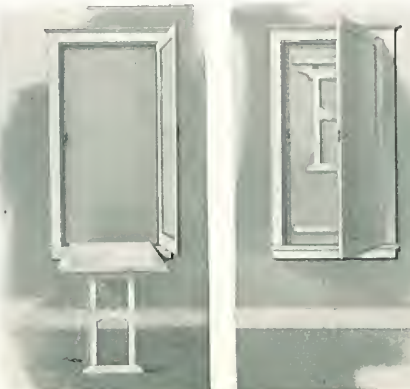
A bay window is a delightful addition to any room. It affords a view up and down the street that an ordinary window does not allow, and also takes advantage of sunlight and breezes from three directions. A dormer may supply light and air for some unused space in the attic and add interest to the roof lines.

Curtis radiator enclosures with iron grills solve a perplexing problem in an attractive manner. A hanging china closet takes up no floor space, and is more appropriate and decorative than a picture.



Hanging China Closet C-731

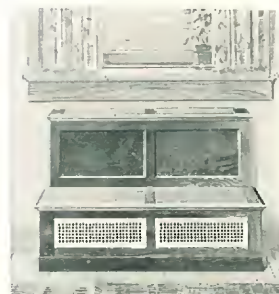
A built-in table (shown in the two middle pictures) is the very thing for the apartment kitchenette, because it affords a table for dining and so leaves the regular living room table undisturbed. A table such as this will also make an excellent supplementary work place in the larger kitchen.



Built-in Table C-741



Medicine Cabinet C-816



Radiator Enclosure C-819

How You Can Obtain Restful Rooms

NOT long ago, the only way the builder of the small house could obtain such things of beauty and comfort as those described on the foregoing pages was to have his lumber dealer order them from his manufacturer, made to the architect's special details. This was a very expensive process, so expensive, in fact, that as a result of it architects' services were largely slighted, and consequently, builders obtained uninteresting, ill-proportioned woodwork that could not possibly produce restful rooms.

The Curtis Companies have changed all this. Architectural authorities have designed practically every item of Curtis Woodwork. You can buy this architectural woodwork for what you would have to pay for mediocre designs made to order.

Go to your dealer and ask him to show you his Curtis catalog. It will give you specific information concerning sizes and other details. Selecting your designs of woodwork from the Curtis catalog is one of the safest steps you can take toward obtaining restful rooms. Look for this trademark

CURTIS

It identifies every genuine piece of Curtis Woodwork. You will find many imitations of Curtis designs and some that are claimed to be just as good. But without this trademark you do not receive Curtis quality—an intrinsic value that unites appearance, utility and Curtis intent.

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1866
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